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Drain It!

The service station at Dangling Rope, one of the most remote in the United States, sells more gas than any other outlet in Utah. Oddly, the business is more than 50 miles from the nearest road, in one of the most sparsely populated landscapes of the lower 48 states. Dangling Rope is a floating gas station, a marina drifting on the eerie, flaccid waters of Lake Powell. Three hundred feet below are the ruins of Glen Canyon, a natural Atlantis drowned in a manmade flood. That floating gas station, anchored in this surreal spot to refuel the flotillas of houseboats that prowl the reservoir, is a perfect symbol for the fate of one of the planet's natural wonders.

The reservoir, the second largest in the United States, and the downstream remnants of the Colorado River are becoming inexorably toxified. The pollution discharged into the water from the thousands of motorboats and jet skis that ply the lake's stagnant waters is equal to the amount of crude oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez every ten years. To top it off more human waste is dumped untreated into the reservoir untreated than any other body of water in the United States. If this keeps up, Lake Powell, which former Bureau of Reclamation head Floyd Dominy christened a "marvel of mankind", is on its way to becoming a hazardous waste site.

The history of the submerged Glen Canyon and its dam, how it came to be and its cultural and environmental legacy, has shaped the development of the modern West and, perhaps more than any other single issue, haunted the conscience of the American environmental movement. At the center of the story is the world's most famous environmentalist, David Brower, whose trip down the canyon with Dominy the dam-builder was immortalized in John McPhee's book, Encounters with the Archdruid. It was Brower, the most creative and radical green of his generation, who signed off on the building of Glen Canyon dam in 1956, as part of a deal to keep the Bureau of Reclamation from building the Echo Park dam inside Dinosaur National Monument in northern Utah, on the Green River. That decision has shadowed him darkly ever since.

Now Brower, 87 years old and battling cancer, has returned to the Four Corners region to inaugurate a new campaign aimed at decommissioning the dam, draining Lake Powell and restoring Glen Canyon.

"It's time to correct one of the most egregious errors of the last century," says Brower. "The decommissioning of that dam will give the restoration era its big break and bring a lot of joy to the 1600 miles of Glen Canyon and its side canyons. They are waiting eagerly to be born again. I know, I asked them all."

The first whites (the native people had been living there for 10,000 years) to see Glen Canyon were almost certainly those in the expedition of Major John Wesley Powell, the one-armed Civil War veteran whose party floated down the Colorado in wooden dories in 1869. Powell's journal of that trip offers some of the finest nature writing of the 19th century and his detailed description of the canyon and the river remains one of the most precise and compelling. It was a major influence on both Brower and Edward Abbey. But Major Powell was no transcendentalist aesthete, no gritty Thoreau of the plateau. He was a utilitarian, full-blown. Powell's mission wasn't merely to describe this last uncharted territory in the lower-48, but to graph it out and discover a way to reclaim the parched land, make it suitable for habitation on a grand scale. The solution, ar-

(**Drain It** continued on page 6)

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Our Little Secrets

Tipper Strikes Camp

More on the whims and stress level of the Second Lady who, be it remembered, once jumped into Lake Michigan with her clothes on, in winter. Foreign service officers become edgy at the prospect of First Lady Tipper descending on them around the globe if Al prevails in November. Word has spread of her visit to succor hapless Hondurans in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch. A diplomat familiar with her trip recalls that Tipper "announced that she was going to sleep in a tent with refugees. No one could talk her out of it. So just about the whole fucking US Army was set to work setting up this special tent and the selection of a few not too verminous refugees to share it with her. Tipper snuggled down, but lasted all of two hours, after which she was up and out of there, back to the hotel."

CNN and Psyops

Following CounterPunch's story on the discovery that US Army psychological warfare personnel worked at CNN hq in Atlanta from June, 1999 to this spring, there was a stir nationally. On March 24 one of your trusty editors, Alexander Cockburn, went on Amy Goodman's Democracy Now program, in the company of Eason Jordan, CNN's president of newsgathering.

"Goodman: Since CNN worked out of RTS [in Belgrade] as well during the bombing, to satellite your stuff up, I wanted to ask if you knew in advance that NATO was going to bomb RTS?

Jordan: We knew that in advance, and I think much of the world knew it in advance, and certainly the Serb leadership knew it in advance. CNN has condemned that bombing, and is very sorry that it ever happened and certainly never would have wanted it to happen.

Goodman: So you were able to get your CNN personnel out before the bombs fell?

Jordan: That's correct.

Cockburn: As it was planned, that bombing was a war crime. [It] involved civilians. So all the people who knew, and I'm not making an exception of the CNN directorship, every correspondent who knew, every news organization in the West [who knew], by not reporting ' We know for a certain fact that this is going to be bombed, we know the time, we've asked our people out,' to that extent they were accomplice to a war crime, were they not?

Jordan: That is ridiculous.

Cockburn: Why is it ridiculous? It's not ridiculous at all. Many of the bombings were actually war crimes. They were direct attempts to inflict suffering on a civilian population. And the bombing of a news outlet was similarly a war crime. And it's not ridiculous to say that you were a party to it. You were.

Goodman: Eason Jordan, let me ask you this, Robert Fisk, with the Independent in Britain did a column where he wrote, "Two days before NATO bombed the Serb television headquarters in Belgrade, CNN received a tip from its Atlanta headquarters that the building was to be destroyed. They were told to remove their facilities from the premises at once, which they did. A day later, Serbian Information Minister Aleksandar Vucic received a fax invitation from the Larry King Live show in the US to appear on CNN. They wanted him on air at 2:30 in the morning of April 23 and asked him to arrive at Serb television half-an-hour early for make-up. Vucic was late—which was just as well for him, since NATO missiles slammed into the building at six minutes past 2. CNN calls this all a coincidence, saying the Larry King show, put out by the entertainment division, did not know of the news department's instruction to its men to leave the Belgrade building."

Jordan: The article's inaccurate. Minister Vucic canceled his appearance on the program twelve hours before it began. That's the reality of the situation."

CounterPunch checked and could find no CNN news story reflecting Jordan's comfortable statement that everyone knew the bombing of Serb tv hq was going to take place. We also called The Independent's Robert Fisk, and told him what Jordan had said. His answer: "There's no doubt Vucik cancelled before hand, but the request to interview was for the time when the missile would have struck. I don't think CNN was setting up Vucik, but I t think it's possible that US government said, "why not get Vucik at that time".

Psyops, OPD & Colombia

We learn from our friends at FAIR that in the 1980s, officers from the 4th Army Psyops group staffed the National Security Council's Office of Public Diplomacy (OPD), a government propaganda agency that planted stories in the U.S. media supporting the Reagan Administration's Central America policies. A senior US official described OPD as a "vast psychological warfare operation of the kind the military conducts to influence a population in enemy territory." An investigation by the congressional General Accounting Office found that OPD had engaged in "prohibited, covert propaganda activities", and the office was soon shut down as a result of the Iran-Contra investigations.

The reporter who first came up with the disclosure that 4th Army Psyops had personnel at CNN is Wayne Madsen, based in Washington DC and author of Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa 1993-1999 (Edwin Mellen Press). Madsen attended the conference on low intensity operations and tells us he was amazed at how freely Colonel Christopher St John, commander of 4th Psyops Group discussed what they were up to. Aside from boasting about the personnel at CNN, St John (who spent much time in El Salvador in the 1980s, as FAIR's report would suggest) disclosed his unit is now planting stories in the Colombian media, via Colombian intelligence officers. The liaison is done

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through the Army's SouthCom. He also disclosed that the NSC director Sandy Berger personally approved some Psyops leaflets during the war on the Serbs. Somalia was apparently a less auspicious experience for 4th Army Psyops, which had severe language difficulties even though the unit recruited every Somali taxi driver it could find in Washington DC. But the taxi-drivers had little patience for Psyops tactics, preferring freelance initiatives of their own, thus contributing to the overall discomfiture and collapse of the US mission.

US INTELLIGENCE AND "INTERN PLACEMENT"

Among several interesting comments on our CNN/PSIOPS story is this from Jan Tucker, who's a private investigator in Los Angeles, also a labor and green activist and sometime candidate: "When I was starting out as a PI, I worked undercover for three years as everything from an industrial janitor in an injection molding factory to purchasing agent in a hospital. The placement of "interns" in a newsroom smacks to me more than anything else as using CNN as a training ground for undercover agents. One of the key factors in undercover placement is that the agent needs to have as much access to different areas throughout a facility as possible. In a factory, you put people in as custodians, material handlers, mail room delivery clerks, etc., occupations that get you mobility around the physical plant. As an intern at CNN, you probably get to go all around the newsroom, boardroom, etc., getting an eyeful and having contact with as many people as possible. It also wouldn't appear particularly strange to anybody if an intern took a trashcan and emptied it to later sift through the contents.

"Keep in mind, as we know from Phil Agee and Marchetti & Marks's works, that intelligence operatives may very well be working under a military cover, so who knows whether some other intelligence agency was merely using Psyops as a training ground for people to know how to behave in a news gathering entity? I imagine that if the CIA or DOD intelligence wanted to place interns at CNN, the request would have been received much more skeptically. Keep up the good work."

DEES AND WTO PROTESTS

Through CounterPunch's mailbox came this letter, from Luma Nichol, of the United Front Against Fascism, in Seattle.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you for your expose of Morris Dees! We couldn't agree more with your piece about Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center (March 16-31, 2000). His charge that WTO protests here in Seattle were directed by European-style fascists is patently ridiculous. We saw no evidence of such infiltration. The protesters were inspiring in their determination to oppose everything that the KKK and the other white supremacy scum represent, including racism and a totalitarian world view.

"Our own experience in fighting Pacific Northwest neo-Nazis has left us very suspicious of Dees' own authenticity in fighting the far right. During the Portland, Oregon, civil suit against Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance over the murder of Mulugeta Seraw, a black man, Dees stood on the courthouse steps and castigated the actions of protesters in the streets who nevertheless helped him prevail in that lawsuit. Dees puts forth that the courts alone will uphold civil rights and actively derails the grassroots persuasion we have found indispensable. This approach to Nazi fighting may make lawyers rich but it will do little to stop the political movement of the Hitlerites. Thanks for pulling no punches against Dees."

And here's another on the same theme.

"Dear CounterPunch, I interviewed an anarchist for a short-lived underground newspaper I published while I was in Fort Collins, Colorado named Duncan Philp. Philp was unfairly smeared as a racist by the Anti-Defamation League and the SPLC for his attendance of Pete Peter's Christian identity La Porte Church of Christ, located north of Fort Collins. Philp, a Seventh Day Adventist, was never a member of Peter's church and a photo of him marching arm in arm with two black men at a 1990 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day event hardly fits the description of a far right racist. Philp puts forward an interesting theory as to why outfits like the ADL and the SPLC are engaged in spying against dissident organizations. The FBI can no longer legally engage in COINTELPRO spying, says Philp. Therefore, today it hires outfits like the ADL and SPLC to do the spying for them. It makes sense to me. Rick Giombetti, A proud resident of Seattle as of April 2.

MINATOM CONSPIRACY

Back in November CounterPunch disclosed a scheme hatched by MinAtom, the Russian nuclear agency, to start importing spent nuclear waste from commercial reactors in Europe and Japan for storage in the Russian outback. This story which made it onto the Censored Stories of 1999 list) has finally siezed the attention of the national press. On April 12, the Boston Globe reported that MinAtom boss Yevgeny Adamov was proceeding with plans to import 20,000 tons of radioactive waste for storage and eventual recycling at the Mayak nuclear facility in the Urals.

Adamov boasted that the deal would generate more than $21 billion over the next ten years, a figure that is nearly equal to the Russian federation's entire 1999 budget. "The deal is extremely beneficial for the ministry, and we are intending to carry it out", Adamov said.

The main stumbling block is a 1992 law passed by the Duma that prohibits Adamov's agency from importing nuclear waste from countries outside the former Soviet Union. But Adamov claims to have the blessing of new Russian president Vladimir Putin and, according to Russian greens, has vowed to overturn the ban in the upcoming legislative session. Last year Adamov was accused of offering Russian legislators a variety of bribes for their votes, including cash, trips to France and prostitutes.

Adamov never enjoyed a particularly close relationship with the inner circle of the Yeltsin government. But he and Putin have been tight since Putin's days in the KGB. Russian greens rightly fear that the Putin/Adamov alliance will prove dangerous both in terms of the risks to the environment and to environmentalists. Under Putin, the KGB's succesor, the FSB, has interrogated and locked up several anti-nuclear organizers, on trumped up drug charges and on the absurd pretext that they may be aligned with the Chechan separatists. CP

A diplomat recalls that Tipper said she was going to sleep in a tent with refugees. No one could talk her out of it.

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He Wants Every Plant on a Barge

GE Stands for "Gone Elsewhere"

By Bob Muehlenkamp

General Electric makes light bulbs and related products at its plant outside Istanbul, Turkey. Its labor costs are about $3.50 an hour. In early March it informed the union it was moving the work to Hungary, eliminating 248 jobs.

GE moved medical systems work from Belgium to Mexico; it is now moving the work from Mexico to Hungary.

Why Hungary? Because it's the latest stop for GE CEO Jack Welch's barge. Said Welch: "Ideally, you'd have every plant you own on a barge." So far he has put over 150,000 US manufacturing jobs on the barge. But as the Hungary examples make clear it's not just good-paying US jobs. GE abandons every community in search of lower standards.

Why Hungary? It's not just the $2 an hour labor costs. It's also that there are no taxes and no unions in new production facilities.

When GE bought the Tungsram lighting plant in 1989 it got a 10 year no-tax guarantee. That's an extra profit of at least 19%, Hungary's lowest tax rate. In recent elections, the "reform" candidate, who is now President, ran on a populist platform of eliminating the 100% tax waiver for companies that invested at least $100 million. GE and others threatened to put their investment on a barge to China or India. It's no surprise that GE just received another 10 year waiver.

GE leads the global corporate agenda. Business Week, The Financial Times, Forbes, Fortune—all call it "the world's most admired company". Welch was just declared "the manager of the century". To pull together a global strategy to deal with this global octopus, GE workers and unions from around the world met in Washington DC in late March. Over 130 delegates from 20 countries created a first-ever GE World Council, sponsored by the International Metalworkers' Federation.

Their goals are to pool GE research, create a structure for communication and mutual support, and to plan solidarity activities with the 14 unions and their 40,000 GE members whose current contracts expire June 25.

The two key issues in the U.S. bargaining are job security and pensions. In 1999 GE had revenues of $112 billion—larger than all but 53 countries in the U.N.—and became the first company in history to make over $10 billion in after tax profits in one year. But, as the GE pension facts make clear, enough is never enough.

The GE pension fund is now almost $25 billion over-funded. Yet the average GE retiree gets $700 a month, and there have been no adjustments for inflation since 1994. While GE workers continue to contribute to the fund, GE has not put in a penny since 1987. Instead of this vast amount of pension fund money going to retirees or to improve the pension formula for workers, GE gives it to shareholders, crediting $1.4 billion from its pension fund investment income to profits in 1999.

But the U.S. campaign is not just about "save good American jobs". The slogan is: "GE abandons every community." And suppresses union rights everywhere. In Malaysia GE refuses to recognize a union because it claims that its production of thermostats at the plant is "electronics" not "electrical" work. Malaysian law enables companies—in violation of international agreements—to avoid union recognition in the electronics sector, denying rights to the 180,000—mostly female—electrical work force. GE refused to allow a worker from the plant time to come to the Washington meeting, retreating only after an international campaign. In Scotland GE has refused to recognize a union despite the fact that over 50% of the employees are union members; GE has threatened to starve the operation of investment in the event of future union activity.

Workers and unions from around the world have just created the first ever GE World Council.

At the WTO protests in Seattle GE workers marched beside a float built to resemble Welch's barge. When unions and others marched in Washington in April to protest China getting NTPR status, GE workers will again be there to put the GE "corporate face" on the struggle: GE's 1998 4-year investment goal for China was $40 billion, and it is already close to that amount.

Job outsourcing, pension fairness, and an international code of conduct will all be featured in three resolutions on the floor of the GE annual shareholder meeting in Richmond, VA, on April 26. GE workers, retirees, and allies will hold rallies and demonstrations in Richmond, at GE's 104 unionized U.S. plants, and around the world on April 26 in support of the resolutions.

The campaign to "Bring GE to Light" is an important part of the effort to deal with the global economy, to make it transparent. Just to find out the facts. As Rep. Marcy Kaptur told the delegates to the March conference, the American public is "unaware" of who GE really is and how they got those profits. The GE unions recently conducted a poll of American opinion about GE. 92% (vs 86% for Microsoft) know the GE name, 56% (vs. 45% for Microsoft) have a net positive image of GE. Yet 67% admit they know "almost nothing" about GE. As Machinist President Tom Buffenbarger told the delegates: "They still think GE stands for an American company that makes appliances and light bulbs, instead of the reality—it stands for 'Gone Elsewhere.'" CP

Bob Muehlenkamp is organizer of a 12-union campaign at GE.

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The FBI's Project Megiddo

Apocalypse When?

In late October, 1999, the FBI began mailing a lengthy, heavily-footnoted report to local law enforcement officials titled "Project Megiddo." It painted a horrifying picture of a country under siege by an army of hillbilly Bible-thumpers, African-American Jew-baiters and heavily-armed prophets of the Apocalypse. According to the report, this volatile coven of anti-government extremists, religious fanatics and doomsday cult members was preparing to trigger its visions of Armageddon - the fiery final conflict between the forces of good and evil - at the end of the year. The report generated headlines and alarmist news broadcasts from coast to coast.

But New Year's Eve came and went and nothing happened. Only two acts of sabotage occurred on New Year's Eve. Someone toppled an 80-foot electrical tower in eastern Oregon, and an electrical transformer in New York was bombed. Neither attack caused significant problems, and no one claimed responsibility for them. In fact, the only serious terrorism threat to surface at the end of the year came from a source that wasn't even mentioned in the Project Megiddo report—Algerians from Canada. Washington state authorities caught Ahmed Ressam trying to smuggle explosives into Port Angeles from British Columbia on December 14. A federal grand jury indicted him and an alleged accomplice on terrorism conspiracy charges a short time later. Although federal authorities say the two men were planning to blow up buildings or other targets in the United States around New Years Eve, they do not belong to any group discussed in the report.

In fact, only three people who fit the profiles in the Project Megiddo report were arrested before the end of the year, and it's hard to know how seriously to take the charges against them. On December 23, two alleged militia members were arrested and accused of plotting to blow up two 12-million-gallon propane tanks, a television tower and an electrical substation near Sacramento, California. The plot was exactly what the report had said was in the works. Kevin Patterson, 42, was reportedly involved with an anti-government group, the Republic of Texas. Charles Kiles, 49, had been convicted in 1992 of weapons violations, and once reportedly led a now-defunct militia group. According to the charges against them, the pair hoped the attacks would provoke an insurrection against the government.

But a closer look at the case reveals Patterson and Kiles may have been set up. They had been under federal surveillance for nearly a year. An FBI informant had reported on the pair's activities for months. In fact, Patterson and Kiles were arrested by the FBI, not by local law enforcement authorities who were tipped to them by the Project Megiddo report. And court documents say the alleged plot was actually put off when one of the men decided to wait to "see what happened in California at the end of the millennium."

The second arrest was even more questionable. Five days after the California arrests, federal authorities charged Donald Beauregard, the former leader of a militia coalition called the Southeastern States Alliance, with plotting to steal explosives from National Guard armories. According to the federal indictment, Beauregard was conspiring to blow up power lines to Atlanta and St. Petersburg, Florida. He was also charged with intending to kill a militia member he suspected of being an informant, and of helping train other extremists how to manufacture explosives. But at the time of his arrest Beauregard hadn't bombed anything or killed anyone. He hadn't even stolen the explosives necessary to carry out his alleged plot. And these three arrests were hardly enough to stop the wave of Apocalyptic terrorism described in the Project Megiddo report.

The bureau relied on flawed research which it then ludicrously overstated. Although the report was written by employees within the FBI's National Security Division, much of the information came from private advocacy groups with their own axes to grind. They included so-called civil rights watchdog organizations, such as Morris Dees' Southern Poverty Law Center whose indictment of the Seattle WTO protests at the end of last year as having been fomented by Euro-Nazis we reported here two weeks ago. The Anti-Defamation League was also involved. Both the SPLC and the ADL has issuing such overblown warnings for many years. Both groups were cited repeatedly in the report's text and footnotes. The ADL has bragged about its involvement in Project Megiddo, virtually taking credit for the report on its website.

Another source of misinformation was clinical psychologist Margaret Thaler Singer, a former advisor to the now-defunct Cult Awareness Network. Before it was driven into bankruptcy by a court judgement in favor of the Church of Scientology (suing CAN for complicity in kidnapping some years ago) CAN issued numerous reports warning that hundreds if not thousands of "destructive cults" were turning large numbers of America's children into mindless zombies (a feat more efficiently engineered by our great pharmaceutical corporations, with the enthusiastic support of shrinks, and the federal medical bureaucracy, plus encouragement from the First and Second Ladies). It was a CAN informant who issued advisories to the FBI as it embarked on its slaughter of nearly eighty Branch Davidians outside Waco.

What happened to all the domestic terrorist attacks that were going to destroy America at the start of the new millennium?

Much like the reports issued by the SPLC and the ADL, CAN exaggerated the minor problems posed by genuinely malevolent cult leaders.

There's some support for the notion that the Project Megiddo report was merely a propaganda ploy. Despite its tone of impending danger, the federal government didn't seem to take it very seriously. After it was released, the FBI all but stopped talking about it. And local law enforcement agencies didn't call press conferences to warn law-abiding citizens about the terrorist attacks just over the horizon.

This ho-hum approach was in marked contrast to the response to the arrest of Ahmed Ressam in Washington. All federal law enforcement agencies immediately went on high alert. This was something serious. CP

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rived at over the next four decades, was to replumb the entire river system with a network of dams, ditches, canals, diversions, reservoirs and pipelines. Cost would be no object. Over the next few decades more than $21.8 billion would be flushed into western water projects—most of it extracted from taxpayers east of the Rockies who would never use a drop of the water.

The first big dam to go up on the Colorado was Hoover in 1935, esigned to funnel water to ever-expanding Los Angeles and the fields and ranches of the Imperial Valley. At the time, Hoover dam was the biggest structure ever built.Behind it was Lake Mead, the world's largest reservoir, holding back two year's worth of the Colorado's annual flow. Speaking at the dedication ceremony, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, extolled the project, touting it as the first move toward "altering the geography of the region". FDR's words were prophetic, though, one suspects, hardly in the way he had hoped. The raising of that dam sanctified a certain mindset toward the arid lands, what the western historian Donald Worster calls in his book Rivers of Empire "a world view of permanent subordination". Nature submerged is nature subordinated. Or as Dominy put it: "The Colorado unregulated isn't worth a damn."

The Hoover dam project also inaugurated another grand tradition of western water schemes: corporate profiting from government porkbarrel. Lucrative contracts for Hoover dam alone transformed three relatively obscure firms (Kaiser, Bechtel and Morrison-Knudsen) into corporate Goliaths. Bechtel would build Glen Canyon dam and oversee the excavation of one of the world's biggest coal mines, Peabody Coal's Black Mesa mine on the adjacent Navajo Reservation.

Hoover was California's deal. Now the Upper Basin (Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado) wanted its shot. Their scheme was grandiose, including mega-dams at Flaming Gorge, Echo Park in Dinosaur National Monument and Glen Canyon. It looked as though the water barons would get exactly what they wanted. They always had in the past. But then in 1952 along came David Brower, the newly hired executive director of the Sierra Club.

Brower was outraged by the Bureau of Reclamation's plan to erect a dam on the Green River inside the canyons of Dinosaur National Monument in northern Utah. The proposal resurrected bad memories from an earlier era, when John Muir, the Sierra Club's patron saint, fought a futile battle against the flooding of the exquisite Hetch-Hetchy valley in Yosemite National Park in 1913. After that travesty, the Club made a vow: no more dams inside national parks or monuments.

Brower was a master organizer, generating one of the first great national campaigns in the history of the environmental movement. But from the beginning Brower's focus was fixed on keeping a dam out of Dinosaur National Monument.

In hindsight, it seems clear that Brower may well have been able to beat back both dams. A few years after Glen Canyon was authorized, Brower and the Sierra Club crushed a proposal to build two more dams downstream in the Grand Canyon itself, a campaign that made public relations history with full-page ads in the New York Times under the banner, "Should we also flood the Sistine Chapel, so tourists can get nearer the ceiling?" The Grand Canyon dams were dead the moment those papers hit the street. And so was the Club's tax-exempt status. Brower believes Stewart Udall, then Secretary of Interior, pushed the IRS to take action against the Sierra Club in retaliation.

Brower called the deal his "greatest sin". He warns young greens, "Never trade a place you know for one you don't".

For two years the concrete poured nonstop into the towering pilings of Glen Canyon dam and the town of Page sprung up on the canyon's rim. It's now a city of 5,000 people, famously describe by Edward Abbey as "the shithead capital of Arizona". On March 23, 1963, the floodgates on Glen Canyon dam closed. From the observation deck outside Page, quarter-mile downstream from the dam, the 710-foot tall structure appears as a sleek blonde colossus sunk into the blood-red Navajo sandstone.

As the dam began to be raised, David Brower and the photographer Eliot Porter took one last float down the river. They documented their trip in a book, archly titled The Place No One Knew. It was a elegy to what had been lost, fully capturing the the canyon's haunted beauty. But the book's title was also somewhat deceptive and self-serving. Many people knew and loved Glen Canyon intimately and passionately, among them folksinger Katie Lee, river guide Ken Sleight and Kent Frost, Edward Abbey, University of Utah historian Gregory Crampton, and the thousands of people who had floated the Colorado and San Juan rivers.

Glen Canyon was not a wilderness. People had been living there for centuries, farming the bottomlands of the Colorado and San Juan. Those people were the Navajo and Ute tribes and before them the Anasazi. As is so often the case, dams displace people, swallow whole communities. Despite its remoteness, Glen Canyon dam was no exception. The dam site itself was on land owned by the Navajo Tribe. In exchange the Navajos were given the so-called New Lands, a couple hundred miles to the south, near Chambers. Nuclear lands would be a better description, since they ended up being contaminated by a uranium spill into the Rio Puerco.

Many other promises were made to the Navajo, pledges for water, power and money. Now they are being offered the opportunity to build a casino/marina at Antelope Point, a few miles upstream from the dam. But traditionalists are balking at the offer. "It's all been a big lie, one empty promise after another", Thomas Morris told CounterPunch. Morris is the head of the Navajo Medicine Men's Association. He recently sheparded through a resolution on the reservation calling for the removal of the dam. Morris points to the fact that the Park Service, which manages the Glen Canyon Recreation Area, won't even allow Navajos to serve as guides to Rainbow Bridge, one of the tribe's most sacred sites. Instead, the Aramark Corporation holds exclusive rights to lead the trips, at a price of $100 per head.

"Since the treaty of 1868 we have been controlled", Morris said. "And for so long, the whites have been able to use our own people against us. Now things are starting to change. I'm glad to see so many Anglos supporting the removal of the dam, so that we can do that too—use white against white."

Another person who knew what would be lost with Glen Canyon dam was the writer Wallace Stegner, a close friend of Brower's who had floated through Glen

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Canyon twice. Before the deal was finalized Stegner told Brower that it was a mistake to trade Glen Canyon for Dinosaur National Monument. "Between us, Dave, Dinosaur doesn't hold a candle to it", Stegner said. By then it was too late.

There were problems with the dam almost immediately. Big ones. For instance; its leaks badly. The Navajo sandstone formation, the soft red rock that gives the canyon its Mars-like hues, is extremely porous; it sucks up water like a sponge. The entire base of the dam is waterlogged, with sheet upon sheet of saturated sandstone. Internal memos from engineers at the Bureau of Reclamation suspected this would happen, but the reports were buried.

Most of the water held back by the dams on the Colorado doesn't go into people's showers, toilets or sinks. Instead, more than 85 percent of it is pumped into irrigation agriculture schemes, one of the most wasteful and, ultimately, self-annihilating enterprises in the interior West.

But the water backed up behind Glen Canyon dam in Lake Powell doesn't go anywhere. The dam is merely a storage project, designed solely to ease the flow of water into Lake Mead hundreds of miles downstream.

If the desert is a poor place to try to farm, it's an equally misbegotten site to store water. Every year more than a million-acre feet of Lake Powell's water is lost to evaporation in the seering heat — enough water to meet the yearly needs of 34,000 homes.

Water was never the main issue at Glen Canyon. The big money at the dam comes from power generation. The huge turbines in the bowels of Glen Canyon dam generate 1,300 megawatts of power a year, enough power for 350,000 homes. Of course, most of the power doesn't go to homes. About 60 percent of it goes on the western power grid to industrial customers. But, ludicrously, much of it is used to power engines that pump water from the other Colorado reservoirs on its way to Las Vegas, Phoenix and Flagstaff. In all, it provides less than three percent of the electricity for the region.

The hydropower from the dam alone isn't enough to get the Colorado's water where it needs to go. When the Sierra Club defeated the Echo Park dam, the Bureau of Reclamation complained that while it might have sufficient water to slake the needs of Phoenix and Los Angeles, it wouldn't have enough power to pump the water to those cities. Brower and his cohorts in the Sierra Club recommended that that the power could be offset by coal and nuclear plants. So four coal-fired power plants were built, including the Navajo Generating Station outside Page.

The HooverDam launched the grand tradition of western water schemes: corporate profiting from the government porkbarrel.

Much of the coal used to feed the generators is strip-mined by Peabody Coal Company out of Black Mesa, the contested mountain that slices across the northern edges of the Hopi and Navajo reservations. To facilitate the expansion of Peabody's operation at Big Mountain, hundreds of Navajo are now being forcibly evicted from their homes—-sometimes at gunpoint. The smoke belched from the plants has fouled the air of the region, leaving large numbers of Navajo children stricken with asthma and the sky so smog-clotted that on many days it's nearly impossible to see across the Grand Canyon.

Admirers of Glen Canyon dam have compared the structure to the pyramids at Giza. It won't last nearly that long. One reason is that the reservoir is fast silting up. The Colorado River deposits 65 million tons of sediment at its base every year. The mud is stacking up at the foot of the dam at the rate of between two and three feet a year. In a little more than 150 years, the silt will have reached the 425-foot level, where it will clog the penstocks that suck water into the power generating turbines. That's if the dam lasts that long. It may breach well before then.

In 1983 it almost did. A year of heavy snows and a rapid snowmelt left the Colorado so flush with water that Glen Canyon dam nearly overtopped, becoming a 710-foot waterfall. At the same time, its spillways blew out and the dam come close to breaching. The flows of the river that year were high, but far from what the Colorado has done in the past and will again sometime in the future.

There was one final insult. In 1956 Brower had fought for and won language in the bill protecting a side canyon harboring Rainbow Bridge, the glorious natural arch that is also one of the most revered sites for the native peoples of the southwest. But it soon became clear that the Bureau of Reclamation had welched on the deal and that the waters of Lake Powell would in fact creep up to the very base of Rainbow Bridge. Brower and the Navajo brought lawsuits in federal court, but lost. The political nightmare unleashed by the Faustian bargain to save Dinosaur National Monument kept getting worse.

The closing of the floodgates sparked a new kind of militant environmental movement, typified by Earth First!, that rejects political dealing-making and compromises. This new movement had a voice, a ferociously eloquent one, that of Edward Abbey. Abbey raged against that dam and all it stood for, writing in 1968 that one way or another it must come down. He envisioned the following scenario for the reservoir's dedication. "Perhaps some unknown hero with a rucksack full of dynamite strapped to his back will descend into the bowels of the dam," Abbey wrote in Desert Solitaire, a book that would become a sacred text to a new generation of envi-

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ronmental radicals. "There he will hide his high explosives where they'll do the most good, attach blasting caps to the official dam wiring system in such a way that when the time comes for the grand opening ceremony, when the President and the Secretary of the Interior and the governors of the the Four-Corner states are all in full regalia assembled, the button which the President pushes will ignite the loveliest explosion ever seen by man, reducing the great dam to a heap of rubble in the path of the river. The spendid new rapids we will name Floyd E. Dominy Falls, in honor of the chief of the Reclamation Bureau." Abbey never did have much use for politics as we've come to know it.

In 1981, Earth First!, the group inspired by Abbey's musings about monkeywrenching, marked its arrival on the scene by dropping a 300-foot long plastic crack down the face of the dam.

Glen Canyon dam doesn't have to end with a boom. It can go out with a whimper and a wild whoosh of freed water. And that's just what Brower and his cohorts have set their sights on accomplishing. In December 1999, a group of some of the finest environmental activists in the country have set up shop right on the navel of the beast: in an old ice-cream parlor in Moab, Utah. They call themselves the Glen Canyon Action Network *(http://www.drainit.org)* and their goal is straightforward: to build an international movement to force the government to decommission the dam, drain Lake Powell and restore the Colorado River.

The group includes river-rafters, small business owners, traditional Navajo and a descendent of Brigham Young. It is headed by Owen Lammers, who earned his chops as the chief organizer at the International Rivers Network where, for more than a decade, he fought dams around the globe, most notably China's gargantuan Three Gorges project. The developing world is experiencing a spasm of dam-building, which is annihilating rich ecosystems and indigenous cultures. These schemes are more often than not financed by US-backed institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Export-Import Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, for the benefit of American corporations. Lammers believes that the best way to turn the tide is to target one of the most famous dams in the world and put it out of business. "That's Glen Canyon and it's a good thing it's located in the US, because we need to show other nations that we are serious about cleaning up our own messes", says Lammers. "When Glen Canyon comes down, others will fall like dominos."

"I wish I could take back the vote to put up Glen Canyon dam. And let that river run free."

But is it possible to drain the lake? Yes. Even Floyd Dominy, Brower's nemesis and the dam's godfather, says so — though, typically, he disagrees with Brower on exactly how it could be done. Under most scenarios, the dam itself would remain standing, the Colorado pouring through its floodgates, an absurdist relic of a lamentable era. The federal government is now looking at pulling the plug on four dams on the Lower Snake River, along the Idaho/Oregon border, to aid dwindling runs of salmon. Those dams provide nearly three times more hydropower than Glen Canyon.

"The barriers to a restored Glen Canyon are not so much technical or economic as political", Lammers says. "It was politics that innundated Glen Canyon. And it will take a peoples' movement to bring about its restoration." The political barriers are familiar ones, though perhaps not as conniving and powerful as the old days. The western congressional delegation has already reacted with predictable hostility, pushing through a legislative rider that bars the Department of Interior from ever examining the feasibility of decomissioning the dam.

But things can change and even the most craven politician can come to his senses when faced with angry constituents. For others it can be a simple matter of conscience. A few months before he died Barry Goldwater, the rightwing senator from Arizona, was asked which vote he most regretted in his long career. "I wish I could take back the vote to put up Glen Canyon dam", Goldwater said. "And let that river run free." CP

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